

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9187

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY NASSAU

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 0275

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, JM

SUBJECT: KINGSTON GANGS DECLARE "TRUCE"

1. WARRING GANGS IN PORTIONS OF CENTRAL AND WEST KINGSTON MET ON THE STREET IN ONE OF THE CITY'S MOST DEPRESSED AREAS ON JANUARY 10 TO DECLARE A "TRUCE" TO FIGHTING WHICH GOES BACK FOR TEN YEARS. TWO GANG LEADERS -- CLAUDIUS MASSOP, A JAMAICA LABOUR PARTY (JLP) ADHERENT FROM TIVOLI GARDENS, AND ASTON "BUCKIE" THOMPSON, A SUPPORTER OF THE RULING PEOPLE'S NATIONAL PARTY (PNP) FROM MATTHEWS LANE -- APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN THE MOST PROMINENT IN THIS REMARKABLE DEVELOPMENT. HOWEVER, TWO JLP (CITY) COUNCILLORS, SAMUEL DRECKETT AND DESMOND MCKENZIE, MAY HAVE BEEN MORE IMPORTANT ACTORS.

2. BY JANUARY 11, JLP AND PNP GANGS IN NEIGHBORING AREAS HAD ALSO ANNOUNCED THEIR ADHERENCE TO THE TRUCE. MOREOVER, THERE HAS BEEN AN OUTPOURING OF PUBLIC ACCLAIM FOR THE TRUCE. JLP LEADER EDWARD SEAGA PLEDGED HALF OF HIS SALARY AS LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (\$5000) AS SEED MONEY FOR A PROPOSED \$100,000

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FUND TO ESTABLISH WORK PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH IN THE AREA. CHURCH LEADERS HAVE BEEN PARTICULARLY VOCAL IN LAUDING THE TRUCE. RECENTLY-APPOINTED NATIONAL SECURITY MINISTER DUDLEY THOMPSON (NO KNOWN RELATION TO PNP GANG LEADER "BUCKIE" THOMPSON) ALSO WELCOMED THE TRUCE, FINDING SPECIAL SATISFACTION IN

THE FACT THAT IT TOOK PLACE "SPONTANEOUSLY". THOMPSON SAID, "I HEARD ABOUT IT BUT I PURPOSELY KEPT AWAY FROM IT, SO AS TO REMOVE THE POSSIBILITY OF GIVING THE TRUCE THE APPEARANCE OF POLITICAL GIMMICKRY."

3. COMMENT: JUST HOW LASTING THE TRUCE WILL PROVE TO BE IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PREDICT. MOST KINGSTONIANS ARE RELUCTANT TO DISPLAY TOO GREAT OPTIMISM. THEY NOTE THAT THE AREA AFFECTED IS SMALL, AND THAT THE GANGS INVOLVED DO NOT INCLUDE THOSE IN SUCH BOISTEROUS NEIGHBOURING AREAS AS ARNETT GARDENS (A PNP STRONG-HOLD) AND REMA (WHERE THE JLP DOMINATES). MOREOVER, THE GANGS INVOLVED ARE LED BY RELATIVELY YOUNGER LEADERS WHO ARE ALLEGEDLY TRYING TO DISPLACE SOMEWHAT OLDER LEADERS. (FOR EXAMPLE, THERE ARE REPORTS THAT "RED TO Y" WELSH, A WELL-KNOWN PNP GUNMAN IN ARNETT GARDENS, HAS REFUSED TO GO ALONG WITH THE TRUCE, SEEING IT AN ATTEMPT BY "BUCKIE" THOMPSON TO DISPLACE HIM.)

4. AND SOME KINGSTONIANS SEE THE "TRUCE" ITSELF AS A TROUBLING DEVELOPMENT. THEY FEAR THAT UNLESS THE MEMBERS OF THE AFFECTED GANGS ARE SOON GIVEN EMPLOYMENT, THEY WILL RETURN TO THEIR FAMILIAR ANTI-SOCIAL WAYS, BUT NOW ACTING IN CONCERT AGAINST THE MORE AFFLUENT UPTOWN KINGSTONIANS. PERHAPS THE MOST CONFIDENTIAL

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DRAMATIC PIECE OF GRAFFITO TO APPEAR THIS WEEK FOLLOWED THE TRUCE. IT SAID, "END GANG WARFARE, BEGIN REVOLUTION." IRVING

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